

DECLASSIFIED
CONFIDENTIAL

THIS DOCUMENT IS THE PROPERTY OF HER BRITANNIC MAJESTY'S GOVERNMENT

CC(02)27th
Conclusions

COPY NO

58

CABINET

CONCLUSIONS of a Meeting of the Cabinet
held at 10 Downing Street on

Extracts relating to Iraq

MONDAY 23 SEPTEMBER 2002
at 5.00 pm

P R E S E N T

The Rt Hon Tony Blair MP
Prime Minister

The Rt Hon John Prescott MP
Deputy Prime Minister and First Secretary of State

The Rt Hon Gordon Brown MP
Chancellor of the Exchequer

The Rt Hon Robin Cook MP
Leader of the House of Commons and
President of the Council

The Rt Hon The Lord Irvine of Lairg
Lord Chancellor

The Rt Hon Jack Straw MP
Secretary of State for Foreign and
Commonwealth Affairs

The Rt Hon David Blunkett MP
Secretary of State for the Home
Department

The Rt Hon Margaret Beckett MP
Secretary of State for the Environment,
Food and Rural Affairs

The Rt Hon Clare Short MP
Secretary of State for International
Development

The Rt Hon Alistair Darling MP
Secretary of State for Transport

The Rt Hon Alan Milburn MP
Secretary of State for Health

The Rt Hon Dr John Reid MP
Secretary of State for Northern Ireland

The Rt Hon Paul Murphy MP
Secretary of State for Wales

DECLASSIFIED
CONFIDENTIAL

DECLASSIFIED

CONFIDENTIAL

The Rt Hon Geoff Hoon MP
Secretary of State for Defence

The Rt Hon Andrew Smith MP
Secretary of State for Work and Pensions

The Rt Hon Helen Liddell MP
Secretary of State for Scotland

The Rt Hon The Lord Williams of Mostyn QC
Leader of the House of Lords

The Rt Hon Patricia Hewitt MP
Secretary of State for Trade and Industry

The Rt Hon Estelle Morris MP
Secretary of State for Education and Skills

The Rt Hon Tessa Jowell MP
Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport

The Rt Hon Hilary Armstrong MP
Chief Whip

The Rt Hon Charles Clarke MP
Minister without Portfolio and Party Chair

The Rt Hon Paul Boateng MP
Chief Secretary to the Treasury

ALSO PRESENT

The Rt Hon Nick Brown MP
Minister for Work

Lord Grocott
Captain of the Gentlemen-at-Arms

SECRETARIAT

Sir Andrew Turnbull
Mr P Britton
Ms L Bell
Mr D Bowen
Mr M Donnelly

CONTENTS

Item	Subject	Page
1.		1
2.		1
3.	FOREIGN AFFAIRS	
	Iraq	1

DECLASSIFIED

CONFIDENTIAL

DECLASSIFIED

FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Iraq

Previous Reference:
CC(02)17.3

3. THE PRIME MINISTER said that the dossier on Iraq's weapons of mass destruction would show that the policy of containment had worked up to a point, but that Saddam Hussein, President of the Republic of Iraq, continued to rebuild his programme to acquire such weapons. The evidence showed his efforts to procure equipment and materials, and to restore production facilities. This was an issue for the United Nations, with whose Security Council resolutions Iraq had not complied. A new resolution was being negotiated. It was the threat of military action which had caused Saddam Hussein recently to invite United Nations inspectors back to Iraq. Only if inspections were thwarted again would

Iraq Inquiry note. This paragraph continues
unbroken onto the next page.

1

CONFIDENTIAL

DECLASSIFIED

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~
DECLASSIFIED

the question of military action arise. Meanwhile pressure had to be maintained on Iraq. We were not at the point of authorising military action now. In presenting the case to Parliament, THE PRIME MINISTER said that he intended also to stress our commitment to rebuilding Afghanistan and making progress towards solving the Israel/Palestine problem.

THE FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH SECRETARY said that the climate of opinion had changed since the speech to the United Nations by President Bush of the United States of America. Responsibility for dealing with Iraq's non-compliance had been placed with the United Nations. To achieve a peaceful outcome a tightly worded Security Council resolution was required and maximum support, including for the threat of the use of force. THE FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH SECRETARY added that the nature of the motion to be put before Parliament if military action became necessary would require consideration.

In discussion the following points were made:

- a. the accusation of double standards, particularly in respect of dealing with Israel, would be made, but the fact was that the development of weapons of mass destruction by Saddam Hussein presented a quite a different order of threat;
- b. facing the United Nations with its responsibility for dealing with Iraq provided an opportunity for the United Nations to achieve success. Iraq's defiance of the international community needed a firm response;
- c. our promotion of multilateral action through the United Nations and our respect for international law gave political legitimacy to our stance;
- d. in the event of military action a clear vision was required of the outcome we wanted in reconstructing Iraq: this would be a major task;
- e. the proportionality of any military action would have to balance the safety of our own forces with the avoidance of civilian casualties on the Iraqi side;

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~
DECLASSIFIED

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~
DECLASSIFIED

- f. the impact on muslim opinion in the United Kingdom would need to be managed to preserve community cohesion;
- g. the United Kingdom had a key role to play in overcoming a tendency in the United States towards unilateralism and that in Europe towards anti-Americanism;
- h. the Middle East needed political impetus, as did other international problems such as the India/Pakistan confrontation over Kashmir and insecurity in Afghanistan;
- i. the international community had to build confidence in democratic values and address the causes of terrorism;
- j. in order to achieve a peaceful outcome, solidarity and resolution backed by the threat of force were needed.

Summing up, THE PRIME MINISTER said that we had reached a crunch point. The sanctions regime against Iraq was being eroded and Saddam Hussein was on the way to acquiring new capability in weapons of mass destruction. Iraq had to comply with the obligations placed on it by the United Nations. A tough line was required. If military action was required, the job could be done. There would be a discussion about the military options. Of course civilian casualties should be kept to a minimum, but there could be no doubt that the main beneficiaries of the removal of Saddam Hussein would be the Iraqi people. Iraq was basically a wealthy country. The international community had to be committed to its reconstruction. Progress also had to be made in the Middle East, which he had stressed in contacts with the United States administration. More generally, we had to engage with muslim countries and also deal with weapons of mass destruction elsewhere as a growing threat to peace and security.

The Cabinet -

Took note.

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~
DECLASSIFIED

